



**JB Pritzker**  
Governor

**Heidi Mueller**  
Director

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November 18, 2020

Dear Families,

The health and safety of your children and our staff is our top priority as we follow the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to manage the spread of COVID-19. Following Governor Pritzker's Executive Orders to reinstate mitigation actions, the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ) is transitioning back to some of our previous mitigation activities. Some of our steps include a comprehensive screening procedure for everyone who enters our facilities, mask wearing, frequent cleaning, adjustments to programming to provide 6 feet of space between people, and access to testing for individuals with COVID-19 symptoms or exposure.

**At this time, we are discontinuing family visits based on the infection rate across the state climbing above 10%.** We hope to begin visits again after the Governor's Executive Orders expire on December 12. Our decisions will be guided by infection rates across the state and/or evidence of the virus spreading between staff or youth at a facility. We will make you aware of any changes in visitation schedule as soon as possible and you can find a tally of positive COVID-19 cases for staff and youth on our website: <https://www2.illinois.gov/idjj/Pages/COVID19.aspx>

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department has focused diligently on preventing the spread of the virus to the young people in our care. We believe that our success in preventing any outbreaks has been due to this diligent focus and your adherence to safety protocols while visiting the facility. We hope you will partner with us in preventing the spread of the virus as you continue visiting your loved ones, so that we can keep all the youth safe and healthy.

If you have any questions or would like to schedule a visit, please contact your child's Youth and Family Specialist or the Superintendent of the Illinois Youth Center where your child is staying. Please also see the Frequently Asked Questions document we have provided to help answer some of your questions about what steps IDJJ is taking to keep youth in our care safe and healthy during this unprecedented pandemic.

#### Proactive Steps to Stay Healthy

The 2019 novel Coronavirus is believed to be spread through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes, like the way influenza, and other respiratory viruses spread. Because of this, individuals are encouraged to follow these common-sense practices:

- Follow Governor Pritzker's Restore Illinois Plan. Maintain social distance and wear a mask.
- Wash hands regularly for at least 20 seconds using soap and water.
- Avoid the touching of eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover mouth and nose with the inside of the arm or with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and throw the tissue away immediately. Wash hands as soon as possible afterward.

Additional information is available from the Illinois Department of Public Health at their Coronavirus-2019 (COVID-2019) website, the COVID-19 Hotline at 1 (800) 889-3931 or by email at [dph.sick@illinois.gov](mailto:dph.sick@illinois.gov).

We will continue to monitor this situation closely in partnership with IDPH and IEMA in the days and weeks to come. Be assured that we will communicate immediately any updates or changes in the virus spread or our internal protocols.

Thank you for your attention,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heidi Mueller', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Heidi Mueller  
Director